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Title: CELL COMBINATION TO UTILIZE AVAILABLE SWITCH BANDWIDTH

Abstract

An apparatus and method for combining the combination of multiple streams of data cells into a single thread. By enabling plural ports of an intermediate device to access a single parallel output of the device, plural network switch elements share a single thread through a switch fabric. For example, the method and apparatus interleaving the relatively low bandwidth cell outputs of two ATM switch central control processors (202A, 202B) onto a single thread (212) routed through an integrated switch fabric (204). Certain these cells are received from the switch fabric at a parallel input of the intermediate device, then routed to plural serial output ports. The output of cells provided to the plural ports prevents exceeding the thread bandwidth.

